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RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL ORNITHOLOGY.— We have before us several recent papers relating to the avian faunæ of a number of quite widely separated localities. To Messrs. Holden and Aiken we are indebted for "Notes on the Birds of Wyoming and Colorado Territories."* These notes were sent to Dr. T. M. Brewer for his private use, and by him communicated to the Boston Society of Natural History. From his introductory note we learn that Mr. Holden's observations were made "in summer," and Mr. Aiken's "between November 1, 1871, and May, 1872. The exact locality, however, is left in doubt, but we are led to infer from Mr. Holden's remarks which follow, that this gentleman's observations were made chiefly about Sherman "in the immediate vicinity of the Black Hills," near the boundary of Wyoming and Colorado Territories. Mr. Aiken's notes, as partially appears from his memoranda (and as I have learned from private sources), were made in El Paso County, Colorado (most of them near Fountain), some two hundred miles south of Sherman and about two thousand feet less in elevation. The two localities thus differ greatly in climatological and other general features affecting the distribution of species. The whole number of species given in the list is one hundred and forty, of which but twenty-seven are common to the two localities. Only fifteen are mentioned by Mr. Holden that are not noted by Mr. Aiken, while the latter reports ninety-eight that are not given by the former. The whole number mentioned as occurring in the vicinity of Sherman is hence forty-two, while one hundred and fourteen were observed near Fountain. The primary value of faunal lists consists, of course, in the indications they give as to the avian peculiarities of limited districts. It would hence have been far better, doubtless, not to have combined in a single list the notes made at such distant localities, and under such diverse topographical and climatic conditions. These observations, however, as thus given, are extremely interesting and very valuable, having evidently been carefully made. They are, moreover, from localities hitherto scarcely explored; the very imperfect recently published list of the birds of Cheyenne (some forty miles east of Sherman, on the Plains, and nearly two thousand feet lower) and the partial

*Notes on the Birds of Wyoming and Colorado Territories. By C. H. Holden, Jr.; with Additional Memoranda, by C. E. Aiken. Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist., Vol. XX, pp. 193-210; Dec. 1872. (Read June 5, 1872.)

lists of the birds of South Park and of the region at the base of the mountains between Denver and Colorado City,* being the only special reports relating to the birds of the region embraced within or contiguous to the districts explored by Messrs. Holden and Aiken.

The country about Sherman is one of the most barren and forbidding of any of the inhabited portions of the great central plateau of the continent, and the small number of species observed there by Mr. Holden fairly indicates its poverty, ornithologically considered. On the other hand, the region about Fountain, in the valley of the Upper Arkansas, is in a far milder and more fertile district, and the much larger number of species reported by Mr. Aiken indicates nearly its proportionately greater richness in avian life. Neither of these lists purports to be complete or exhaustive, yet they probably embrace all the more common and characteristic species of the two localities.

The whole number of names given is one hundred and forty-two, but in the foregoing remarks it has been considered safe to regard the *Troglodytes ædon* of Holden's list and the *T. Parkmani* of Aiken's as identical, both undoubtedly referring to the same race (*T. ædon*, var. *Parkmani*) of *T. ædon* and not to two species, even if it be assumed that *T. Parkmani* and *T. ædon* are specifically distinct. In like manner the *Scolecophagus ferrugineus* of Holden's list has been regarded as *S. cyanocephalus* of Aiken's, since the latter is a common summer resident far to the eastward of Sherman, while *S. ferrugineus* has not been previously reported from points nearer Sherman than Eastern Kansas. I have also learned that *Erismatura Dominica* should read *E. rubida*.

Mr. W. D. Scott has given a "Partial List of the Summer Birds of Kenawha County, West Virginia."† The list is based on "two months of field-work (from the middle of January till the middle of August, 1872)," and embraces eighty-six species. The accompanying notes indicate the relative abundance of the species observed, and embrace occasionally short notices of habits and descriptions of the first or nesting plumage of the young, in cases where such stages had not been previously well described.

The avian fauna of Kenawha County consists of a mixture of

* See Allen's "Ornithological Reconnaissance of Portions of Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and Utah," Bull. Mus. Com. Zool., Vol. III, pp. 113-183, June, 1872.

† Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist. Vol. XV, pp. 219-228, Jan. 1873 (Read Oct. 2, 1872).

species more or less distinctive of the Alleghanian and Carolinian faunæ, representatives of the former prevailing in the highlands, and representatives of the latter in the valleys. The capture of a pair of *Dendroæca Dominica* is reported,—a species whose northern limit of distribution has generally been supposed to be the lowlands of the South Atlantic and Gulf States. Mr. Scott calls especial attention to the fact that certain species which range over a wide area in latitude differ appreciably in color at this locality from their representatives from more northern or southern localities, being more intensely colored than those from points to the northward, while they are less so than those found further south. *Thryothorus Ludovicianus* and *Ortyx Virginianus* are cited as strongly marked instances. As a faunal list, the paper affords valuable data concerning the summer distribution of the birds of the Atlantic States.

Mr. T. Martin Trippe has published "Notes on the Birds of Southern Iowa,"* based on "the author's observations during a period of nearly two years in Southern Iowa. . . . One year was spent in the southwestern part of Mahaska County; the other in the northeastern part of Decatur County, the latter point being fifty or sixty miles southwest of the former." Mr. Trippe states that although these localities are so near each other, and similar in their physical features, there are quite marked differences in their avian faunæ. In Mahaska County, for instance, the Warblers are much more abundant than in Decatur County, while several species were met with at the latter or more southern point that were not seen at the other. Among these are *Zonotrichia querula*, *Spizella pallida*, *Vireo Belli* and *Salpinctes obsoletus*, birds whose range is chiefly westward and southward. *Spizella pallida* is properly a bird of the plains, and *Salpinctes obsoletus* has not been previously reported much to the eastward of the Rocky Mountains. Several pages of remarks descriptive of the locality and its faunal peculiarities introduce the list, and add much to the value of the paper.

The list, though not presented as a complete one, is believed by its author to pretty fairly represent the main avian characteristics of the region in question. Of the one hundred and sixty-two species mentioned, ninety-two were observed breeding, or in such numbers during summer as to leave no doubt of their breeding

* Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist., Vol. XV, pp. 229, March, 1873 (Read Oct. 16, 1872).

there, eighty-five of them being regarded as common. Mr. Trippe calls attention to the fact that all but fifteen of the species he found breeding in abundance in Southern Iowa, breed also abundantly on the Atlantic coast, in the same latitude, nearly fifteen hundred miles to the eastward. This he considers as an astonishingly small difference, considering the great distance between the two points. Although perhaps surprising at first sight, when taken in connection with the fact of the considerable differences in the faunæ of localities separated by only two or three hundred miles in latitude, it finely illustrates certain general laws of geographical distribution, namely, that difference in longitude has *per se*, almost nothing to do with the limitation of habitat, while a slight difference in latitude, being necessarily accompanied by differences of temperature, is a powerful modifying cause. In other words, that species are limited in longitude by climatic and other differences in the conditions of environment resulting from the configuration of the general surface of the country, and not by distance merely. Mr. Trippe's list is accompanied with valuable notes relating to the season of occurrence and relative abundance of the species. — J. A. A.

NEW AVIAN SUBCLASS.* — The recent discovery of *Ichthyornis dispar*, and *Apatornis celer*, is one ranking in interest, and importance with that of the *Archæopteryx*; an important gain to palæontology which, as Prof. Marsh observes, “does much to break down the old distinctions between Birds and Reptiles, which the *Archæopteryx* has so materially diminished.” With just appreciations of the value of the characters presented, the writer proposes for the birds an order *Ichthyornithes*, and a subclass *Odontornithes*. The vertebræ were amphiæcelian, and there were numerous, small, compressed, pointed teeth, distinctly socketed, in both jaws. If Prof. Marsh's surmise, that the *Archæopteryx* likewise had teeth and biconcave vertebræ, should prove true, a question of synonymy with *Saururæ* might arise. In explanation of the improper allocation of *Ichthyornis* (in the Key to North American Birds), among ordinary natatorial types, it should be stated that information of the discovery was received just as the pages were going to press, and in advance of Prof. Marsh's final determinations. — E. C.

* On a New Subclass of Fossil Birds (ODONTORNITHES). By O. C. Marsh, “American Journal Science and Arts,” v, Feb., 1873 (pub. Jan 21, 1873).